

Inaugural Address of Mayor Thomas P. Koch

January 6, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Reverend Clergy, Colonel O'Brien, Former Mayors, Congressman Lynch, Attorney General Coakley, Treasurer Grossman, Auditor Bump, Justice Coven, Senator Keenan, Majority Leader Mariano and members of our state delegation, County Officials, Members of the City Council and members of the School Committee. Citizens of Quincy, Friends all:

Congratulations to the members of the Council on your election, and to Councillor Finn on being selected as President. Congratulations to members of the School Committee, to Kathy Hubley for being selected Vice Chair, and a special welcome to its newest member, Noel DiBona. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to serve and govern our great and historic city of Quincy.

As we know, our City Charter dictates that this occasion be held on the first Monday of January, and this year it falls on, in the Christian tradition, The Feast of the Epiphany. I am not going to make any Wisemen jokes, although there is plenty of material available. More importantly, to me, on this date, our household celebrates the birthday of my wife, Christine. Happy Birthday, Christine.

I know those of us who serve in elected office do it out of love of our City, but it involves sacrifices made by the ones we love – so tonight I offer my remarks in honor of the spouses and families of those who serve in elected office.

At inaugural events we often speak of capital projects and programs, agendas and vision. We have made tremendous progress over the last six years: A new senior center, a new high school, a new track and field facility, a new middle school here at Central – Look around folks, this building is a credit to our city's commitment to our children and our future – planning for a new Sterling Middle School, seawall repairs, flood control projects, new financial systems, our downtown, the historic restoration of the Coddington School and old City Hall – I could go on – we are truly a City on the move!

But, tonight I want to talk about our human capital – great people and organizations who serve this community with amazing passion and whose contributions truly form the foundation and the future of our City. A city is more than bricks and mortar, more than infrastructure. A city is made a community by its people, people that care deeply about their neighbors. We come together as a people of different faiths, cultures, economic and social backgrounds, but we come together under God as Americans and all part of the same Human Family.

I'm going to speak about a number of individuals and organizations that represent the very best of our community and stand as a great testament to that human capital, which gives me such great faith that our best days as a City lie ahead of us. Many of those individuals are with us in the auditorium, and I'd ask them to stand when their name is mentioned.

Our human capital is in our service organizations, and people like Tom Shepherd – a member of the greatest generation -- enlisted in the United States Navy and served on the USS Richard Leary during World War 2. The destroyer and her crew were involved in SEVEN invasions. Tom, upon returning home, did what most members of his generation did – went back to work, raised a family and built this nation. Tom married Geraldine and they are the parents of five children, ten grandchildren and ten

great grandchildren. Tom has been a member of the Quincy Elks for 62 years. For over 50 years as a member and Chairman of the Veterans Visiting Veterans Committee. Tom has visited veterans in the hospital every week – every week for 50 years – quite remarkable. Thank you Tom for your commitment, thank you to the Elks, the Masons, the Knights of Columbus, The Sons of Italy, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Quincy City Club and to all of our service organizations for what you do.

Our human capital is in our youth coaches and mentors: Joseph Brill – Joe is known as “Mr. Baseball”. For nearly 30 years Joe has coached youngsters in baseball and softball. He taught them the fundamentals about, and a love for, the game. He has mentored hundreds of kids, helping to shape them into good citizens. Joe has fought some tough medical challenges in recent months, but he must be feeling better because his jokes are as bad as ever. Thank you Joe for your commitment to our kids and thank you to all coaches and volunteers in Quincy Youth Baseball/Softball, Quincy Youth Soccer, Quincy Youth Football, Quincy Youth Hockey, Quincy Track Club, Quincy Youth Basketball, Sacred Heart Basketball, Presidents League Basketball, Houghs Neck T Ball, Wollaston T Ball, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts. To all – thank you.

Our human capital is in our nonprofit agencies and the volunteers who give their time to our neighbors who need it most. John Dunner, volunteering at Interfaith Social Services for 20 years. John gives 30 hours a week helping Interfaith serve the residents of Quincy in their time of need. John can be seen at the regular annual food drives collecting the boxes, helping to organize the donations and delivering food to those who need it most. He loves to volunteer and serve. Any non-profit organizations’ success is dependent on its volunteers, and they would be lost without the John Dunner’s of this world. Thank you John, and Thank you Interfaith, Quincy Community Action Programs, Quincy Asian Resources, DOVE, the Germantown Neighborhood Center, the St. Vincent DePaul Society, Father Bill’s Place, the Quincy Animal Shelter, the Quincy Historical Society, Quincy Art Association, Quincy Choral Society, Quincy Symphony Orchestra and all of our nonprofit agencies for the work you do that benefits so many of our neighbors.

Our human capital is in our small business community, the jobs they create and the constant support they provide for so many of our community endeavors, whether it’s sponsoring local youth teams or countless charitable causes. People like Phyllis Godwin of Granite City Electric, Wendy Simmons of Prism Energy Services, Scott and Sean Galvin of Galvin Construction. They lead successful businesses and want our city to continue to thrive.

Small businessmen such as Ed Keohane, Bob Curry, Richard Barry, Mark Bertman, your work with the Quincy Partnership, a labor of love for you, all for the improvement of the quality of life for the people of our City. Thank you to our entire small business community.

Our human capital is also in our larger corporate Citizens, people like Mr. Doug Briggs, president of the Quincy Mutual Fire Insurance. A 150-year old Quincy company employing more than 200 people and supporting our school systems’ community partnership program and helping the city in countless ways. Their commitment to our future with an investment of nearly 20 million dollars in our New Quincy Center vision and plans is unprecedented. Thank you Quincy Mutual and to our other great corporate citizens such as Stop & Shop, State Street South, Arbella Insurance, Quirk Automotive, Cashman Companies, Granite Telecommunications, Blue Fin Technologies and so many others.

Our human capital is in labor, and the hundreds of hands, so many of them from Quincy, who built this school with pride and expertise. The electricians, the plumbers, the bricklayers, the carpenters, the laborers the ironworkers, all of our tradesmen whose contributions to our community don't end with raising steel and laying brick. Be it financial or volunteering their time, our labor community contributes to countless community endeavors, and we are grateful for all you do.

Our human capital is in our spiritual leaders and communities of faith. As some of you may be aware, the Archdiocese of Boston is implementing some major changes in the make up of Parish communities. In Quincy the three separate parishes of St. Mary, Sacred Heart, and St. Ann will become part of a collaborative. As part of the process Fr. David Callahan, Pastor of St. Mary, Fr. John O'Brien, pastor of Sacred Heart, and Fr. John Ronaghan, pastor of St. Ann have tendered their resignations effective in June of 2014. One new pastor will be named for the collaborative of the parishes. I wish to thank these three devoted priests for leading their parishes and being there for so many people in their time of need. I thank all of our priests, ministers, pastors, imams, rabbis, sisters and monks for providing for the spiritual needs of our Human Family.

Our human capital is in our children and our public school students whose character and work ethic at such an early age gives me great hope for our future.

Four students from our two high schools are with us tonight. These students are members of the class of 2014 and are leaders and role models having a positive impact on the culture of their school.

From Quincy High School, the president of the National Honor Society, member of the Science National Honor Society and ranking 7th in her class: Martha Pham. Martha belongs to the Quincy High School solo and ensemble chorus, Philosophy Club, Pony Express School Newspaper and is a student Docent at the Museum of Fine Arts. She volunteers for Project Bread and the Walk for Hunger, Operation Days Work, and has raised funds to promote awareness for Ovarian Cancer. Martha is a recipient of the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship which honors high academic achievement on MCAS, and is the 2013 Quincy High School Homecoming Queen.

Matthew Kozlowski, also from Quincy High School, is a member of the National Honor Society, Business Honor Society, Students Against Destructive Decisions. He is captain of the Football Team and a four-year member of the Varsity Hockey team. He has volunteered for the Walk for Hunger, Walk for Hospice, and coaches youth basketball. Ranked in the top 15 of his class, Matthew received the MIAA Sportsmanship Award in 2012 and has participated in round table discussions related to school grants with the State Treasurer, State Representatives, School Committee and Superintendent of Schools.

From North Quincy High School, Carolyn Schwartz. Carolyn is ranked 9th in her class and is a member of the National Honor Society. A standout on the volleyball court, she has served as team captain her junior and senior year and will captain the Sailing Team in the spring. A member of the NQHS Caring Hearts Club and Interact Club, she volunteers at Interfaith Social Services and Joshua's Run and Visual Walk. Carolyn recently learned that she received early acceptance to attend Cornell University where she most likely will pursue chemical or mechanical engineering.

Vincent Tran is also an excellent student at North Quincy High School and has received a full academic scholarship to attend Hamilton College in New York. A three-sport athlete, Vinny served as co-captain of

the Football Team and is a member of the basketball and volleyball teams. He is a member of the NQHS Caring Hearts Club, Interact Club and ROTC. He has volunteered at the USS Salem, coaches in the Sacred Heart Youth Basketball program, and has volunteered at the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Society every year since the 6th grade.

Thank you Martha, Matthew, Carolyn and Vincent for being an example for your peers to follow, and we wish you all the best in whatever path you choose. I know you will be successful.

Our Human capital is in our City employees, so many of whom have made it their life's work to quietly provide the day-to-day services our residents count on. I have invited two of our city employees to be with us tonight.

Lynn Fox, Lynn has worked for the city for 40 years currently serving the Office of the Assessor. She is a Blue Star mother, her son, Thomas, remains on active duty after two tours overseas as a military police officer with the National Guard. And William Wright. Bill has worked for the Department of Public works for over 36 years and is a veteran of United States Army, serving three active-duty tours spanning three decades. Both are exemplary employees and are greatly respected by their peers.

Lynn and Bill have served this community proudly for a total of more than 75 years, and are just two of our many dedicated employees who work for our City in jobs too often not afforded the recognition they deserve. These are our teachers, our firefighters, our police officers and like Lynn, our clerks and Bill, our laborers. I'm tremendously proud and grateful to all of our City workers.

Also tonight four dedicated city employees come to mind. Four individuals who were called home by their Creator.

Firefighter John Austin... He will never be forgotten by his brother Jakes of Engine 5 and of Local 792.

Teacher Michael Curtin...Curtie leaves a legacy of love of learning to the children he taught.

Traffic Supervisor Kathy Minukas... She will be remembered for her service to the kids entrusted to her.

Stephen McGrath, Director of Human Resources, former City Solicitor and City Councillor. A dear friend, he lives on in the hearts and minds of dedicated civil servants at City Hall.

My friends, as I look among this gathering this evening to formalize and inaugurate our government, I am reminded that we are a City of workers; a city has risen and set to a shipyard whistle, a city that has sought revitalization and renewal; a city that embraces new faces, a city of history whose forefathers created our republic and a City that reaffirms its commitment to our fellow citizens through acts of volunteerism, faith, and kindness.

John Adams described our City as that "remarkable spot." This evening we recognized a few of our community members, but countless acts of fellowship define our human capital. These people, these

groups, these organizations -- this human capital -- is the granite foundation of our great City. It is what makes it that "remarkable spot." And it is what makes our future, together as a community, one with such limitless potential. I am truly grateful and proud to serve as Mayor of the greatest City in the Commonwealth.

I pray for peace in our hearts, peace in our homes and peace in our world. Thank you, may God Bless America and May God Bless the City of Quincy.

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